



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

OUR SECOND LINE—THE NATIONAL GUARD.

BY JOHN J. ESCH.

WE claim to be the most progressive nation on earth, and yet, if we were judged by the laws on our statute books relating to military affairs, we would be considered one hundred years behind the times. A few instances will make good this statement.

From 1812 to 1900 there was a federal statute providing that all honorably discharged officers and men should be allowed one day's pay, according to their rank, for every twenty miles of travel from the place of discharge to the place of original muster. In other words, a colonel, for each one thousand miles of travel, was entitled to receive from the Government \$486.12, although the time consumed under modern systems of travel would not exceed one day. Such a law, when twenty miles constituted a day's journey, was reasonable and just; but in these days of rapid transit it would be a source of rank extravagance.

A study of the militia laws of the United States furnishes still more glaring examples of the fact that we have not been up to date. The Act of May 8, 1792, organizing the militia, however much it may have been violated in both letter and spirit, was nevertheless up to January 21, 1903, the law. By its terms, every captain was to enroll within the bounds of his company every able-bodied male citizen between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years, who, upon notice of such enlistment, was to provide himself "with a good musket or firelock of a bore sufficient for balls of the eighteenth part of a pound, a sufficient bayonet and belt, two spare flints, and a knapsack, and pouch with a box therein to contain not less than twenty-four cartridges suited to the bore of his musket or firelock, each cartridge to contain a proper quantity of powder and ball; or with a good rifle, knapsack, shot-pouch and powder-horn, twenty balls suited to the bore

of his rifle, and a quarter of a pound of powder." Each commissioned officer was to arm himself with "a sword or hanger and spontoon." As though this were not a sufficiently formidable array, our forefathers provided that each company of artillery should have "six bombardiers" and that its officers should be armed "with a sword or hanger, a fusee, bayonet, and belt, with a cartridge-box to contain twelve cartridges." The commanding officers of each troop of horse were to "furnish themselves with good horses of at least fourteen hands and one-half high, and be armed with a sword and a pair of pistols, the holsters to be covered with bearskin caps"; while each dragoon, besides the ordinary accoutrements, was to provide himself with a mail pillion, valise, breast-plate and crupper."

It is, perhaps, safe to say that not one guardsman in a thousand can describe the weapons and accoutrements which, under the law of 1792, he was obliged to furnish at his own expense. So obsolete were some of these weapons and accoutrements that no definitions thereof can be found in modern lexicons or encyclopædias. Nothing can better bring to mind the primitive nature of the weapons provided by this old law than the following description of a "firelock" taken from Rees's Cyclopædia:

"Firelock, in strictness applies to every species of firearms, which are discharged by means of locks containing springs, etc., that impel a flint fixed in a species of vise, at the head of that part called the cock, against a curved steel-plate called the hammer, so as to produce from this collision sufficient fire, in the form of sparks, or scintillations, which, being by the action of the device directed into a hollow called the pan, before covered by the hammer, cause the gunpowder deposited in that hollow, and which is called the priming (it being the first portion of that combustible to be ignited), to take fire, and of course by means of the touch-hole, which opens into the pan, to explode the charge that is rammed into the bottom of the barrel."

From Farrow's Military Encyclopædia it is learned that a "spontoon" was a weapon bearing resemblance to a halberd, which, prior to 1789, was borne instead of a half-pike by officers of the British infantry. It was a medium for signalling orders to the regiment. The spontoon planted in the ground commanded a halt; pointed backward or forward, advance or retreat, and so on. The ungraceful and grotesque shape of the weapon points out very accurately the time of its invention—the period of wigs and three-cornered hats.

With hanger and spontoon, mail pillion and breast-plate, and holsters covered with bear-skin caps, an officer of our ancient militia must have made "a picture no artist could paint."

It is true that some amendments have been made to this old law from time to time; but the fact that so much of it remains relating to obsolete arms and accoutrements indicates a highly conservative or non-progressive spirit on our part, or a deeply rooted prejudice against a military establishment. Prejudice against a large standing army always has existed, and no doubt always will exist; but of late there has been a growing sentiment, induced doubtless by our experiences in our recent war with Spain, that no arms, supplies, or equipments, can be too good for the officers and men who, under trying circumstances and under great difficulties, are maintaining the dignity of our Government and the honor of our flag both at home and abroad.

The exactions and despotism of large standing armies prejudiced our forefathers against permanent military establishments; and, from the days of Concord and Lexington, the "minute men" have been the ideal soldiers of the Republic. They constituted the citizen soldiery, which, in all the great emergencies of our country, have borne the brunt of war.

Whether as militia, volunteers, or national guards, this citizen soldiery has received, so far as the several States are concerned, more or less encouragement as manifested in their militia laws. It has been the subject of constant appeals from almost every President. Washington, in his message of 1790, declared that "a free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined, to which end a uniform and well-digested plan is requisite"; and again, in 1791, that "the militia is certainly an object of primary importance, whether viewed in reference to the national security, to the satisfaction of the community, or to the preservation of order." Succeeding Presidents endorsed the maintenance and improvement of the militia, as "an emergency force," as "the best security for a free people," as "the great bulwark of the public safety," permitting us to "at once enjoy the repose of peace, and bid defiance to foreign aggression."

Notwithstanding the appeals and recommendations of the Presidents and the authority granted Congress by the Constitution "to provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining the militia," few changes in the obsolete law of 1792 were made, and

the only support granted by Congress for almost eighty years was an annual appropriation of \$200,000, which was increased in 1887 to \$400,000, and in 1900 to \$1,000,000.

After each of our wars, the militia having played a greater or less part therein, a temporary increase in the military spirit was manifested. The War of 1812 did not redound to the credit of the militia of that day, as the unfortunate controversy between several of the States and the general Government over the question of officers' commissions, and the Hartford Convention arising therefrom, cast a shadow over the service for a time.

The Mexican War, our standing army being small, was largely fought and won by militia regiments from the Southern and Western States enlisting as volunteers.

It was not until the Civil War that our people were made to realize the benefits of a well-regulated militia, and to regret the fact that more support and attention had not been given to it, not only by Congress, but by the Legislatures of the several States. The militia and National Guard of the North were practically exhausted by Lincoln's first call for 75,000 men; and, to fill the calls for subsequent thousands, men were enlisted who had had no previous training in the school of the soldier. We had no reserve that could make any pretension to military experience. There was no second line of sufficient size, strength, and organization worthy of the name. The same condition of affairs obtained in the South. For the first call for 75,000 men, some of the older States, like Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, furnished regiments as well drilled and equipped as regular troops; and these regiments, by reason of their superior training, furnished hundreds of officers of every rank and grade to other commands. Had there been a second line of 150,000 or 200,000 men as well drilled, equipped, and organized as these few regiments, the story of the Rebellion might have been told in one chapter instead of a dozen.

The terrible experiences of the Rebellion were, nevertheless, insufficient to impel Congress to bring about a reform or reorganization of the militia. Barring a few minor amendments enacted in 1861 and 1862, the Act of 1792 seemed to have been as immutable as the law of the Medes and Persians. This apathy on the part of the general Government did not characterize the several States. Many of these, through their Legislatures, ignoring and

expressly violating the Act of 1792, revised their militia codes or adopted new ones to bring the service abreast of the military science of the day, and maintained and increased the efficiency of their militia by liberal appropriations.

We have a still more recent illustration of the weakness of our second line in the Spanish-American War. At the outbreak of that war, the organized militia or National Guard of the United States was nominally 114,000 men. Upon a call for volunteers, the President assumed that a force of at least 100,000 men would report at the several camps of rendezvous fully armed, equipped, drilled, and ready for service. The men volunteered and reported promptly, and manifested that spirit of loyalty which has always characterized Americans when the call to duty sounded; but it was found that the arms and equipments were in many instances old and valueless; that the uniforms in many cases were not up to the standard—in fact, many of the men in some regiments appeared in civilian dress without arms or equipments of any kind; and that both officers and men in many instances had little or no military training or experience.

It was further found at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War that the cavalry and artillery arms of the militia or National Guard were disproportionately small. Twenty of the States had no cavalry organizations; thirteen no artillery organizations; while in ten of the States no examinations were required for commissioned officers. This lack of cavalry and artillery organizations in the National Guard or militia is accounted for by the heavy cost of maintenance, and yet these are the two arms of the service which require the longest training. As it is at present, in case of war we would have to rely upon the cavalry and artillery of the regular army. While these two arms of the service have been somewhat increased by the Army Reorganization Act of 1900, they would be quite inadequate and out of proportion in the event of war; so that, for a proper development of our second line, greater attention must be given in the future to these two arms of the service in the National Guard.

The volunteer regiments of the Spanish-American War, notwithstanding a lack of drill and experience in many regiments, rapidly developed into a splendid body of soldiery, and nobly acquitted themselves of every task imposed. When it is remembered that the general Government at the outbreak of that war

appropriated only \$400,000 for the support of the militia of all the States, it must be acknowledged that it got a very good return for its investment. The several States expended annually almost seven times as much as the general Government in supporting the National Guard, and some States, like New York and Pennsylvania, appropriated more money annually for their respective National Guards than the Government appropriated for the National Guard of the entire country. So far as financial support is concerned, Congress has in a large measure atoned for its past neglect by raising the annual appropriation since 1900 to \$1,000,000. This sum, with a much larger total appropriation made by the States, ought soon to fully clothe and equip the entire National Guard of the country.

However, something more is needed than mere equipment. The Spanish-American War disclosed the fact that uniformity, coherency, and efficiency are still lacking. These could only be secured by a wise and thorough revision of the federal laws relating to the militia. Such revision has been made and incorporated in the so-called Dick bill recently passed by Congress and signed by the President on the 21st of January. This bill is the result of much careful study, and has received the endorsement of the leading officers of the National Guard of almost all the States. In the words of Secretary Root, this bill makes the following reasonable and proper provisions:

"(1) For the ordinary training and discipline of the militia as a force belonging, in time of peace, to the several States; (2) for its special employment by the general Government as a part of the constitutional military forces in time of war or public danger, such use being made the subject of special statutory limitations in respect to time, place, and occasion of its employment; (3) for its acceptance by the United States, in the form of complete organizations, as a part of any volunteer forces that may be authorized to be raised and embodied in the event of war; and (4) for the volunteer service of its individual members, with preferential rights of appointment and enlistment, in any volunteer forces that may be authorized by Congress, in an emergency of war, in excess of or in addition to the organizations of the militia which may tender their services as such, under the authority of their respective States."

In the attainment of uniformity in organization, armament, discipline, and instruction the regular army is to serve as standard and guide. The gay and heterogeneous uniforms of the

guards of the different States, and even of the same State, are to give way to the plain but serviceable fatigue and dress uniforms of the regulars; the Springfield and other rifles of different calibres are to be supplanted by the Krag-Jörgensens of the latest pattern; the obsolete tactics of Upton are to be superseded by the revised and simpler tactics now in force in the army; the annual regimental encampments, so often held for purposes of mere show and pleasure, are to yield to regimental, brigade, and division encampments, where, by the presence and example of regular troops and the instructions of regular officers, the duties and responsibilities of true citizen soldiery are to be impressed.

The most effective way of securing such uniformity, so necessary in a great emergency, is to bring together on the same field and in the same camp regular troops and the National Guard. This has already been tried in some of the Eastern and Western States with most gratifying results. The practice should be largely extended. To this end, General Dick's bill authorizes the Secretary of War, upon the request of the Governor of any State or Territory, to detail one or more officers of the army to command encampments of the organized militia of the National Guard for purposes of instruction and inspection. The bill further provides, on the request of the Governor, for participation by any part of the organized militia of any State in the encampment manœuvres and field instruction of any part of the regular army at or near any military post or camp or lake or sea-coast defences of the United States; and, when so participating, it shall receive the same pay, subsistence, and transportation as are received by the regulars, these expenses being paid by the Government.

This plan of co-operation has always been a favorite project with Secretary Root. The ignorance of both officers and men as to camp sanitation and the field exercises and manœuvres of large bodies of troops at Camp Alger, Chickamauga, Jacksonville, Tampa, and other points of rendezvous in the spring and early summer of 1898, no doubt impressed Mr. Root with the necessity of improvement in this direction. Since the Rebellion, few of our regular army officers even have had an opportunity of commanding anything larger than a regimental post; and the command of a brigade, to say nothing of a division, was an experience almost wholly unknown. The National Guard officers had even less opportunities of commanding camps; and in all but three or four of

the States the officers of our National Guard have had command over no larger military organization than a single regiment, either in camp or field, and in many of the States the total strength even of a regiment was never assembled. When, therefore, such officers were suddenly called upon to command integral parts, whether company, regiment, brigade, or division, of an army corps in the great camps of mobilization in the Spanish-American War, they disclosed a lack of training, which was due to no fault of their own, but arose out of conditions then existing in both the regular army and the National Guard.

To remedy this defect and to supply this lack of opportunity on the part of both officers and men, the militia bill provides for the assembling of large bodies of troops in given camps. The union of the guards and regulars in many of the States, besides bringing about a more cordial feeling and improving the *esprit de corps* of both, would afford the officers experience in brigade and division commands, and would furnish the men with a practical knowledge in field manœuvres and the school of the soldier. Instead of waiting, therefore, until war is actually upon us before affording our officers and men the experience and instruction to be acquired by the mobilization of large bodies of troops, as is done in Germany, it would be the part of wisdom to furnish this instruction and experience now.

A step in this direction was taken in the Army Reorganization Act of 1900. This act contained a provision for the preliminary examination and survey of four sites, or permanent camp grounds, for the instruction of troops of the regular army and National Guard, these camps to be so located as to best serve the greatest number of troops of the regular army and the National Guard. If such camps be established and a camp located, for example, at Camp Douglas, Wisconsin, the present camp ground of the National Guard of that State, equi-distant from the regular army posts at Fort Sheridan, Ill.; Fort Snelling, Minn.; Fort Brady, Mich.; and the new post at Des Moines, Iowa, it could easily become the rendezvous of an army corps where, within twenty-four hours, more than 20,000 of the National Guard could be mobilized. At such a camp, all arms of the service could be represented; and, while the infantry would predominate, the artillery and cavalry of the regular army would furnish a sufficient force for purposes of instruction and battle manœuvres. At such a camp the

guardsmen who are accustomed to the limitations of an infantry regiment would gain some practical knowledge of the movements of large bodies of infantry, the practice and drill of the field artillery, the evolutions of the cavalry, the operations of the signal and hospital corps, and would see as nowhere else save in actual warfare the end and purpose of army organization.

The writer's seven years' experience in the National Guard has led him to respect its achievements and its possibilities, but has not blinded him as to its defects and its limitations. The enactment of legislation along the lines of the Dick bill will tend to increase the achievements and possibilities of the National Guard and to remove its defects and limitations.

The passage of such a bill and the increased annual appropriation of \$1,000,000 by the general Government, together with a new supply of rifles and ammunition from the arsenals of the United States, just provided for, will add new life to our National Guard; and it is to be hoped that the defects heretofore made apparent in times of emergency will never again occur. It is to be hoped that our present National Guard of about 120,000 men may, in the near future, be increased to 150,000 or 200,000, so that our second line may become, what it was originally designed to be under the Constitution, "a force to execute the laws of the Union, suppress insurrections, and repel invasions."

With a standing army which for one hundred years did not exceed 25,000 men, and which to-day does not exceed 70,000, we ought to feel all the greater interest in improving, increasing, and strengthening our second line, the National Guard. It costs the State and Federal Government at present less than \$33 per man annually, as compared with \$1,000 per man in our regular army, and about \$450 per man for the hundreds of thousands in the standing army of Germany. For our home defence, therefore, our people need never groan and sweat beneath the weary load of a Pretorian army. With our National Guard placed upon a sure and respectable footing, we shall have demonstrated to the nations of the earth how to arm ourselves so that "every citizen shall provide the nation with a soldier, and yet no soldier deprive the nation of a single citizen."

JOHN J. ESCH.